

Pacific Excellence Scholarship - 2026



THE UNIVERSITY OF
WAIKATO
Te Whare Wānanga o Waikato

The Pacific Excellence Scholarship was established in 2018 to support the University of Waikato's commitment to recognise and foster the excellence of our Pacific students. The Scholarship is awarded based on meritorious achievement and connection to the Pacific community. Up to 20 scholarships are awarded each year.

1. Eligibility and Selection Criteria

1.1. To be eligible, applicants must:

- 1.1.1. have achieved NCEA Level 2 with at least Merit (or the equivalent through examinations such as the Cambridge International Examinations (CIE) or the International Baccalaureate (IB) examination).
- 1.1.2. be of Pacific Island descent.
- 1.1.3. demonstrate involvement in, and commitment to, the Pacific community.
- 1.1.4. be studying at NCEA Level 3 (or equivalent) towards University Entrance in the year of application.
- 1.1.5. be intending to enrol full-time (a full-time academic year comprises [120 points](#)) in an undergraduate degree programme¹ at the University of Waikato for the first time² in the year of tenure; and
- 1.1.6. be eligible for domestic fees status (i.e. be a NZ Citizen, NZ Permanent Resident, NZ Resident Class Visa holder, or Australian Citizen/Permanent Resident domiciled in NZ).

1.2. GAP YEAR - Applicants who are taking one 'gap year' in the year of application may also be considered, but must:

- 1.2.1. not have done any degree-level study at another tertiary institution on their gap year.
- 1.2.2. have achieved a minimum of Merit (or equivalent) at both NCEA Level 2 and 3, and achieved University Entrance.
- 1.2.3. have adequately explained the reason for their GAP year.

1.3. New Zealand citizens studying at an overseas secondary school in the equivalent NCEA Level 2 year, the year prior to application, can apply if they meet all other conditions.

1.4. Selection is based on:

- 1.4.1. academic ability (calculations will be based on the best 80 credits across University Entrance (UE) equivalent subjects at Level 2 and above, from all years up to and including the year prior to application)..
- 1.4.2. contribution to and/or positive engagement with the Pacific community.

¹ This does not include diplomas, certificates, pathway to undergraduate study through programmes offered by the [University of Waikato College](#), or any programmes of study that are less than 240 points total. Te Tohu Paetahi, is acceptable only where used as a pathway into an undergraduate degree-programme. If a recipient's degree structure requires them to enrol in an alternative programme of study in their first year of study, they can request special consideration by completing the [scholarship variation request form](#).

² Applicants who have undertaken **Unistart** papers at the University of Waikato are **not** excluded by this clause.

- 1.4.3. commitment to succeed in university study.
- 1.4.4. Preference may be given to applicants who meet the [strategic objectives of the University of Waikato](#).
- 1.5. **To ensure ongoing eligibility and scholarship maintenance**, recipients must:
 - 1.5.1. by the withdrawal deadline of A Trimester in the year following application be accepted into an undergraduate degree programme at the University of Waikato³.
 - 1.5.2. enrol full-time in at least two Trimesters each year of tenure (i.e., 120 points, usually eight papers).
 - 1.5.3. achieve at least a B average across all papers each year of tenure.
 - 1.5.4. In Year One participate fully in the [Imua Programme](#) (the Pacific Student Success Coordinator will send a report to Scholarships).
 - 1.5.5. Note also Clause 5.2.

2. Value, Tenure and Awarding

- 2.1. The value of each Scholarship will be **up to \$20,000 for up to three years** tenure subject to the recipient maintaining eligibility (refer to clause 1.5), and any additional funding the recipient may gain.
 - 2.1.1. **In Year One** the recipient will receive \$1,000 paid to the recipient as soon as practicable after the withdrawal date of A Trimester. In addition, the recipient may choose **either**:
 - \$10,000 towards accommodation in the University Halls of Residence
 - **OR** \$2,000 cash after the withdrawal deadline for C trimester (contingent on Clause 1.5.3) and a tuition fees credit of up to \$8,000, including Student Services Fees; any remainder of the tuition fees portion of the scholarship will be forfeited.
 - 2.1.2. **In Years Two and Three:**
 - The recipient will receive \$4,500 in tuition fees.
 - If a recipient's fees are covered by another scholarship (not fees-free), then the recipient may request to receive a portion back as cash (up to \$3,000 maximum), which will be paid after the withdrawal date of C Trimester.
 - If the value of the scholarship is more than the tuition fees, the remainder will be put towards the Student Services Fees. Any additional funds remaining will be forfeited.
- 2.2. Successful applicants will be advised of the offer of a Scholarship via their MyWaikato portal and must accept the offer by the prescribed date or the offer will lapse.
- 2.3. In accepting the Scholarship, the recipient will be deemed to:
- 2.4. have read, understood, and accepted the conditions of the Scholarship and the [Scholarships Policy](#).
- 2.5. agreed to participate in any publicity concerning the Scholarship arranged by the University of Waikato

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3. Application

- 3.1. The closing date for online applications is **31 August each year**.
- 3.2. As part of the online application process, each applicant must include:
 - 3.2.1. Academic achievements.
 - 3.2.2. Future aspirations and motivation to succeed at university.
 - 3.2.3. Community engagement and commitment to the Pacific community.
 - 3.2.4. Leadership roles/positions within and outside of school.
 - 3.2.5. Gap year activities during the year of application (if applicable); and
 - 3.2.6. Any other information of relevance to the Selection Panel.
- 3.3. Each applicant must also request the submission of two references:
 - 3.3.1. An online Academic Assessment which is to be completed by the applicant's Secondary School (The school will also be contacted directly by the University to obtain the assessment. However, the applicant must make their school aware of this impending request); and
 - 3.3.2. A reference attesting to the applicant's activities and roles (especially those with a Pacific focus) in the wider community. The referee must not be a member of the immediate applicant's family.

4. Selection Panel

- 4.2. The Selection Panel will comprise the Chair of the Scholarships Committee (or nominee) in the Chair, the Assistant Vice-Chancellor (Pacific) or nominee, the Pacific Student Success Coordinator, the Future Student Advisor – Pacific, and a Pacific staff member appointed by the Assistant Vice-Chancellor (Pacific).
- 4.3. The Selection Panel will consider the applications and may contact referees on a confidential basis for further relevant information.
- 4.4. The Selection Panel's decisions are final, and no correspondence will be entered into following the selection meeting.
- 4.5. The Selection Panel may refrain from making a recommendation if it finds no applicants of sufficient merit.

5. Other Conditions

- 5.2. If a recipient is in receipt of a student allowance, another scholarship, or any type of financial assistance, it is their responsibility to check their entitlement to other income and any tax implications.
- 5.3. Recipients who take up this Scholarship are expected to complete at least four trimesters of full-time study at the University of Waikato (i.e., 240 points). Those who withdraw their enrolment before the end of this period will normally be required to pay back the full sum of monies received.
- 5.4. Should a recipient withdraw from any papers, without adding sufficient papers to maintain an overall enrolment in a minimum of 120 points for the academic year, the University may ask for the Scholarship to be repaid.
- 5.5. The Scholarship may not be held in conjunction with:

- 5.5.1 any other University of Waikato funding that includes either a tuition fees credit or accommodation credit as a component.
 - 5.5.2 any other scholarship or award of the same or greater total value.
- 5.6 The Scholarship may be held in conjunction with any other scholarship, award or prize, unless the conditions of the other award preclude this.
- 5.7 The Scholarships Committee may terminate this Scholarship at any time, and recoup any funds disbursed, if the holder withdraws from the University of Waikato, brings the Scholarship or the University into disrepute⁴, or is otherwise not complying with the conditions governing the Scholarship and/or the regulations of the University of Waikato. The holder of a Scholarship shall have the right to appeal to the Scholarships Executive against any decision to terminate the Scholarship.
- 5.8 The Scholarship is not refundable to the student under any circumstances, although (in the case of fees payments) a student who withdraws from the University may (under the provisions of the Fees Regulations) apply for a refund of tuition fees paid that were not covered by the Scholarship.
- 5.9 The Scholarships Committee has the power to amend or vary these regulations, provided that there is no departure from the main purpose of the Scholarship.

⁴ See [Code of Student Conduct](#).